



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Marking International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, GWI urges Governments to increase the number of female teachers

Geneva, Switzerland, 19 June 2018— On International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, Graduate Women International (GWI) notes especially the crucial role that education plays in conflict and crisis (EiCC) (in trying to prevent such situations arising, ensuring that the youth continue to be empowered and to overcome the negative impact of such crises). Concerningly, we must also acknowledge the dangers women and girls encounter when attending, and teaching, school during periods of any form of armed conflict and the high risk of sexual violence they face while further acknowledging the essential role played by women teachers. Marking the 3rd International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, GWI urges governments to increase the number of female teachers and to advance legislation that provides necessary and sufficient protection of women and girls when attending and teaching school during these periods of unrest.

GWI also notes the vital contribution female teachers play in the EiCC context by serving as role models for female students and in keeping girls engaged and interested in staying in school. However, the discussion needs to also include the holistic needs of the female teachers themselves.—The pressure they face contributes to the shortage of female teachers in conflict areas. We are concerned that the real threat of sexual violence is a barrier for future female generations to pursue higher education and/or wish to pursue careers in teaching.

"Of all the violent acts committed during war and conflict, there is no more abhorrent act than the sexual violence against women and girls. It is the most brutal form of physical and psychological harm that can be perpetrated against its victims and holds the victim, her family, her community in its sinister thrall. We must do all we can to organize, protest and hold the international community accountable for the elimination of this most pernicious form of violence and support the women and girls who are its victims", says Geeta Desai, GWI President.

Sexual violence in conflict and as a warfare tactic, is a breach of the United Nations Declaration of the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict and the Geneva Convention, however, we constantly learn of this sexual warfare taking place globally. GWI urges increased political will combined with community involvement be undertaken to reduce the occurrence and effects of sexual violence during civil unrest, gang wars etc., such as increased education and monitoring of military and police personnel, counselling for those affected, ensuring that girls remain or return to their schooling. Education must be recognized as an essential part of well-developed and sustainable solutions. As contributors to girls' education and their futures, GWI runs the Teachers for Rural Futures programme. You can find out more [here](#).

Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in over 60 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through



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access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

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